



Overcoming National Demarcations in Building Partnership Capacity and Interoperability

The Viking Exercise Series is an instructive example of capacity and capability building that strengthens partnerships. Dan Gardner explains.

In his recent National Defense Strategy, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates noted we are in an era of persistent conflict – the Long War – facing complex challenges.

Yet there are also opportunities for the future. More recently he stated: “over the long term, we cannot kill or capture our way to victory. What the Pentagon calls ‘kinetic’ (or “hard”) operations should be subordinate to ‘non-kinetic’ (or “soft” power) measures to promote participation in government, economic programs to spur development, and efforts to address the grievances that often lie at the heart of insurgencies.”

The United States must strengthen and expand alliances and partnerships to build capacity and capability. This effort must include the full range of national and international military, civil, governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental organizations to be able to undertake what Dr. Gates calls “whole-of-government” operations. We recognize that our

Allies often possess capabilities, skills, and knowledge that we cannot duplicate but we all have capabilities, skills and knowledge that can be shared.

The Swedish VIKING exercise series is, in my view, very instructive in this regard in that it employs diverse resources and capabilities from all government sectors, in both hard and soft power, with flexibility in their employment. This diversity of tools, military and non-military, allows for the creation of more plausible options for the particular national command authorities and sets the stage for unified action (i.e., integrated whole-of-government operations). We can certainly learn from this model as we continue to pursue a “whole of government” global training environment.

One of the key enablers to build partnership capacity is through the training process. As the United States has shifted its joint training regimen from “train the way we fight” to “train the way we operate,” the opportunities to build partnership

capacity through training have expanded. While we have always trained with our Allies, the predominant traditional manner of such training was limited to a specific precise geographic place, and mostly a live delimiting physical and particular training venue. With today’s technology this is no longer the case, as it provides all of us greater training opportunities.

Technology has unfettered our heretofore restraints to train, exercise and mission rehearse together, greatly enhancing our collective training capability and partnership opportunities. Our shared vision for the creation of a global Live, Virtual and Constructive (LVC) training environment is no longer a vision but a firm reality, and an expanding capability to train anytime and anywhere. This persistent LVC global training environment provides for vastly increased opportunities to train together.

A prime enabler of this global environment is U.S. Joint Forces Command’s (JFCOM) Joint Knowledge Development and Distribution Capability (JKDDC). Via its Joint Knowledge Online (JKO) JFCOM has developed Internet-based joint knowledge portals, both unclassified and classified, to distribute courseware and knowledge around the world in support of individual education and training – anytime and anywhere. JKDDC provides key foundational support to the Joint National Training Capability (JNTC), the LVC globally distributed unit and staff collective training environment that links command and control systems, models and simulators, via its Joint Training and Experimentation Network (JTEN).

The future challenge for all of us is to work together to network this global training environment to other successful training capabilities such as the Viking Exercise Series. This will further enhance our global training community’s opportunity to pursue both “hard” and “soft” power while building partner capacity.

By and through building partner capacity, ours as well as others, cultural and capability barriers are reduced. Understanding each other is critical and a prerequisite to achieving unified action. Viking 2008 does just that. [mst](#)

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